

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE	
REPLY TO OFFICE ACTION DATED 06/25/2002	Atty. Docket No. (Opt.) CIT1270-1



COPY OF PAPERS
ORIGINALLY FILED

Applicant Lewis, et al.	
Application Number 09/905,157	Filed July 12, 2001
For Electrical Passivation of Silicon-Containing Surfaces Using Organic Layers	
Group Art Unit 2813	Examiner Kielin, E.

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Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Certification Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.8

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231, on August 23, 2002.

Carolyn J. Williams
Carolyn J. Williams

Dear Commissioner:

In response to the Office Action mailed June 25, 2002, Applicants respectfully traverse the restriction requirement for the reasons set forth below but elects to prosecute claims 1, 4, 5, 13, 16, 17, and 21-27 of Group I-B (including generic claims 1 and 13) if the restriction requirement is not withdrawn. Note that Applicants do not make any admission that the groups of claims as defined in the Office Action are independent of each other, not independent of each other, distinct from each other, or not distinct from each other.

If the search and examination of an entire application can be made without serious burden, the examiner must examine it on the merits, even though it includes claims to independent or distinct inventions. (M.P.E.P. § 803, emphasis added). A serious burden on the examiner may be prima facie shown if the examiner shows by appropriate explanation either separate classification, separate status in the art, or a different field of search. The Office Action makes conclusory statements of subgroups within Group I but makes no showing of serious burden between the subgroups of Group I as required by the M.P.E.P. Therefore, the invention of Group I should be examined as a whole since no prima facie showing has been made.

Regarding Groups I, II and III, proper examination of the method claims will involve searching for methods that form electrical structures. In other words, a proper search of the method claims will yield references with electrical structures formed by those methods. Due to the co-extensive searching, searching and examination of the entire application must be made in accordance with the M.P.E.P. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the restriction requirement for not meeting the search burden requirement set forth in the M.P.E.P.

The Office Action uses an "independent OR distinct" standard when the language in 35 U.S.C. § 121 clearly requires "independent AND distinct" (emphasis added). When statutory interpretation is at issue, the plain and unambiguous meaning of a statute prevails in the absence of clearly expressed legislative intent to the contrary. *In re Donaldson*, 29 U.S.P.Q.2d 1845, 1848. The Office Action fails to point out any language within the legislative history of the statute to support "AND" (conjunctive connector) as meaning "OR" (disjunctive connector). The fact that the PTO may have failed to adhere to a statutory mandate over an extended period of time does not justify its continuing to do so. *Id.* at 1849. The Office Action fails to point to any binding and compelling statutory, federal rule or judicial authority to support a position that "AND" in the statute means "OR." The Office Action does not address independence between the groups of claims at all. The fact that the Office Action does not address independence between the groups likewise causes the restriction requirement to be improper. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the restriction requirement for not meeting the statutory requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 121.

Applicants appreciate the time and effort expended by the Examiner to review this case. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and favorable action in this case. Applicants have now made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. For the foregoing reasons and for other reasons clearly apparent, Applicants respectfully request full allowance of all pending claims.

Applicants believe that no fees are due with this reply and are concurrently submitting a petition for an extension of time. If any fees are due, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-1355 of Gray Cary Ware & Freidenrich, LLP.

All correspondence regarding this application should continue to be sent to:

Lisa A. Haile, Ph.D.
Gray Cary Ware & Freidenrich LLP
4365 Executive Drive, Suite 1600
San Diego, CA 92121-2189
Telephone: (858) 677-1456
Facsimile: (858) 677-1465

Contact the undersigned attorney for any questions or issues related only to this specific reply.

Gray Cary Ware & Freidenrich LLP
Attorneys for Applicants



George R. Meyer
Reg. No. 35,284

Dated: 8/23, 2002

1221 South MoPac Expressway
Suite 400
Austin, TX 78746-6875
(512) 457-7093 - Telephone
(512) 457-7001 - Facsimile